



THE NORTHEAST-MIDWEST HOUSE COALITION

GREAT LAKES TASK FORCE

July 28, 2021

Speaker Nancy Pelosi
U.S. House of Representatives
U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy
U.S. House of Representatives
U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy,

As co-chairs of the bipartisan Great Lakes Taskforce, we write to strongly urge you to support full funding for an additional heavy icebreaker on the Great Lakes in the upcoming infrastructure package. Funding a Great Lakes icebreaker now will meet a critical need for the region's domestic manufacturing capacity.

Over the past several decades, the United States Coast Guard's (USCG) Great Lakes icebreaking fleet has declined in size and high-end capability. At the same time, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reports that heavy ice years will remain an inevitability in the region, which means that the Great Lakes will see regular recurring heavy ice years moving forward. With only one heavy Great Lakes icebreaker, only waterways on one side of the Soo Lock can be broken.

Additionally, changing climate patterns are resulting in fluctuating lake levels, more frequent winters with heavy ice cover, and a higher intensity and frequency of extreme storms. These conditions impact ice thickness and create unpredictable ice flows. Both ice cover and severe storms cause closures of critical waterways across the region, stalling shipping traffic.

Providing for an additional Great Lakes heavy icebreaker will ensure robust economic opportunity in the region which generates a combined \$6 trillion of economic activity. The U.S. steel manufacturing industry, a sector critical to national security, is centered in the Great Lakes, and depends on maritime transportation to move iron ore from ports in western Lake Superior to steel mills across the basin. Great Lakes waterborne commerce annually supports more than 147,000 jobs in eight Great Lakes states and generates \$20.3 billion in business revenue. Full funding for an additional heavy icebreaker on the Great Lakes will support union shipbuilders, address impacts of climate change, and support economic resilience and, with it, billions of dollars in revenue and wages.

For these reasons, we urge you to support the provision of a heavy icebreaker in upcoming infrastructure legislation. Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,



Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress
Great Lakes Task Force
Democratic Co-Chair



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Member of Congress
Great Lakes Task Force
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